

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6624
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMCONSUL HONG KONG

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE KUALA LUMPUR 7526

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY HOLBROOKE FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O.11652: N/A
TAGS: SREF, PORG, MY
SUBJECT: US-ASEAN DIALOGUE-REFUGEE SITUATION

REF: (A) STATE 95610 (B) KUALA LUMPUR 3198

1. WE EXPECT THAT ASEAN INTEREST AT THE US-ASEAN DIALOGUE WILL BE QUITE HIGH ON THE INDOCHINA REFUGEE PROBLEM, AND THAT THEY WILL PRESS HARD FOR FURTHER ACTION BY THE U.S. TO RELIEVE THE GROWING REFUGEE BURDEN ON ASEAN COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY MALAYSIA AND THAILAND. THE MALAYSIANS ARE NOW SEEING RECORD NUMBERS OF BOAT PEOPLE ARRIVING ON THEIR SHORES. LAST WEEK, FOR EXAMPLE, THERE WERE SOME 1800 ARRIVALS HERE, 700 MORE THAN IN ANY PREVIOUS WEEK AND THREE TIMES THE WEEK'S DEPARTURES FOR THE U.S. AND ALL OTHER COUNTRIES. LAST MONTH WE SET A RECORD FOR DEPARTURES FROM MALAYSIA, REACHING 857. WE EXPECT TO BUILD UP STILL FURTHER TO 1,000 DEPARTURES PER MONTH, BUT EVEN THIS WILL OBVIOUSLY NOT MATCH ARRIVALS.

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2. PER INSTRUCTIONS REF A, AT THE SAME TIME WE INFORMED THE GOM OF OUR NEW LRP PROGRAM FOR 25,000 ADDITIONAL REFUGEES LAST APRIL, WE INDICATED THAT LEGISLATION FOR A MORE PERMANENT PROGRAM WAS BEING SOUGHT.

I HOPE THAT AT THE US-ASEAN MEETING WE WILL BE

ABLE TO PROVIDE AUTHORITATIVE ASSURANCES TO THE ASEAN REPRESENTATIVES THAT WE ARE SEEKING A LONG-TERM SOLUTION TO THIS PROBLEM THROUGH PERMANENT LEGISLATION. IF WE CAN ALSO GIVE AUTHORITATIVE ASSURANCES THAT THE NEW SYSTEM OF WORLDWIDE, RATHER THAN HEMISPHERIC, IMMIGRATION QUOTAS WILL GIVE FURTHER RELIEF, THIS WOULD BE HIGHLY DESIRABLE.

I FEAR THAT IF WE DO NOT SHOW SOME SIGNIFICANT COMMITMENT IN THIS REGARD, THE MALAYSIANS, AT LEAST, ARE GOING TO DRAW THE CONCLUSION THAT WE ARE LOSING INTEREST AND THEY WILL TRY TO INSULATE THEMSELVES FROM THE PROBLEM BY TAKING MORE FORCEFUL MEASURES TO DISCOURAGE REFUGEE ARRIVALS HERE. THEY ARE ALREADY STEPPING UP PATROLS TO REDUCE THE CHANCES THAT AT LEAST SEAWORTHY BOATS WILL COME ASHORE.
MILLER

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Message Attributes

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